

CONGRESSMAN **JESSE L. JACKSON JR.**

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Senator Rand Paul Owes America an Apology

*"No current issue... rises to comparison with the sin of African slavery." -- Harold Holzer "Slavery meant NO choice...no one chose to become a slave."--
Dr. Vernon Burton*

At a Wednesday hearing of the Senate Health, Labor, Education and Pensions Committee, Senator Rand Paul denounced the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act as "slavery", [saying](#) that "basically, once you imply a belief in a right to someone's services — Do you have a right to water? Do you have a right to food? You're basically saying you believe in slavery."

Congressman Jackson issued the following Statement:

"As an anti-federalist, pro-states' rights proponent, Senator Rand Paul's statements linking slavery to the Affordable Care Act demonstrate a dangerous, ignorant, and unsupportable revisionist view of American history that should not be allowed to stand unchallenged under the guise of his concern about the role of the federal government.

"From before the Civil War to the present, states' rights have been the operative legal philosophy of anti-government activists like Senator Paul. Throughout history conservatives have argued that slavery was a state right. If slavery was a state right, then states' rights can never be human rights.

"Every American that is fighting for a society that provides comprehensive healthcare, an education of equal high-quality for all American children, and the right to a safe and sustainable environment are fighting to overcome the limitations of the 10th Amendment, and establish these principles as their human rights. This lack of understanding by Senator Rand Paul only serves to widen the profound disparities that have existed in our republic since the inception of our nation."

Harold Holzer, chairman of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation and author, co-author or editor of 41 books on Lincoln and the Civil War, commented, "There is an inherent danger in comparing the profound national shame of slavery to any current and ongoing political debate,"

"No current issue, however contentious, rises to comparison with the sin of African slavery. Lincoln himself believed that slavery stained our reputation to the world and made hypocrisy of American liberty—and worked his whole life to expand rights, not to contract them. Again, comparisons to any current issue are wholly out of proportion—and certainly do not in my view reflect Lincoln's belief that ours should be a republic with 'malice toward none and charity for all.'"

Historian, Lincoln scholar and Clemson University professor **Dr. Vernon Burton**, said, "Senator Rand Paul uses the word 'slavery' as if enslavement had been a mere inconvenience for enslaved people. Comparing the expansion of health care to slavery goes beyond ridiculous hyperbole; it cheapens and delegitimizes the lived experiences of millions of enslaved people and their descendants, and shows a callous disregard and/or ignorance of both history and humanity. Racial slavery was the holocaust of American history; it was a brutal system of enforced labor where families were torn apart, people sold, whipped, denied human rights, and worse.

"Rand Paul equates health care with a physician's lack of choice. Choice is an important concept in American understanding of liberty, but liberty also means responsibility. Someone has a choice to become a doctor or not, and those who become doctors usually want to help others. Slavery meant NO choice. When Abraham Lincoln suggested that those who approved of slavery should volunteer to be slaves, no one chose to become a slave."

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